

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE**

Refer to: DHR

**ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 2003-02**

**AWARDS POLICY**

Sec.

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1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria and procedures for awards for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS). This policy includes the Commissioned Corps Honor and Service Awards (PHS Personnel Manual CCPM Chapter CC.27); Awards for Civil Service Employees, of a monetary nature (IHS 97-10, Section B) and Honor Awards. Further development of honor awards is in accordance with IHS policy (Recognition and Awards Program, 97-10, Section 7.A. (7) which strongly encourages all IHS components to create additional categories of honorary (non monetary) awards.

Each service unit and the Albuquerque Area Office will establish an Awards Committee to be recognized as an ongoing function of the Albuquerque Area operations and will be managed in accordance with the procedures and guidelines described in this issuance. This policy is in accordance with the processing requirements set forth by IHS policy and procedures for Civil Service Staff Monetary Awards and Commissioned Officer Honor and Service Awards.

2. **REFERENCES.** Department of Health and Human Services, HHS-451-1; Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 5 CFR 451 and 531.501; IHS Circular 97-10; Commissioned Personnel Manual, Chapter CC.27 and all legal references identified therein.

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3. **POLICY:** It shall be the policy of the AAIHS to use all available means to positively recognize the contributions of deserving persons (employees [civil service and commissioned officers], tribal leaders, tribal employees and community members). Recognition will be based on noteworthy contributions made to the IHS Mission in partnership with American Indian and Alaska Natives people, to raise their physical, mental, social, and spiritual health to the highest level.
4. **AWARDS COMMITTEES.** Each service unit and the Albuquerque Area Office will establish an Awards Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Awards Committee) to be recognized as an ongoing function of the Albuquerque Area operations. It will be managed in accordance with the procedures and guidelines described in this issuance and in accordance with the processing requirements set forth by the IHS policy and procedures for civil service staff monetary awards, commissioned officer honor and service awards and IHS Circular 97-10. The function of each Awards Committees is:
  - a. To develop, implement, coordinate and/or monitor the recognition of all employees, tribal groups or tribal individuals and others (as permissible by rule, regulation, policy and procedures) who have made noteworthy contributions over the previous 12 months to the improvement of health care delivery; have a positive impact on the IHS and Albuquerque Area and/or service unit mission, goals, and operations.
  - b. Meet monthly to review Commissioned Corps honor and service awards, review nominations for employee of the month awards, review Headquarters honor award nominations and to do post-review of the use of civil service monetary awards.
  - c. Each committee's membership should consist of:
    - Human Resources Representative
    - Financial Management Representative
    - Health/Clinical Programs Representative
    - Labor Union Representative (as appropriate)
    - Commissioned Corp Representative
    - OEHE Representative
    - Tribal Representative
  - d. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary will be elected from this group and will serve for two years in these offices.
  - e. The Awards Committee will be required to maintain minutes of all meetings. These minutes will be maintained and made available for review.

- f. The Awards Committee will be required to produce any reports necessary for the Area Director's SES or other information regarding use of allocated dollars to support the Area Awards Program.
- g. Each Awards Committee will perform post award review of all monetary awards approved and issued to civil service employees to assure compliance to the intent of IHS Circular 97-10, IHS Recognition and Awards Program; and to facilitate the submission, approval and awarding of the ribbons and medals for Commissioned Corp officers in accordance with CCPM Chapter CC.27.
- h. All Award Committees will report to the Executive Officer/Area Director on a quarterly basis, providing a written report of awards distribution throughout programs and service units.

5. **PROCEDURES:**

A. **Commissioned Corps Honor and Service Awards.**

Nominations. Supervisors of Commissioned Corps Officers are required to evaluate performance and service assignments and submit nominations for honor and service awards of officers under their immediate supervision in accordance with provisions of the Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual Chapter 27, CC.27. Nominations are to be sent to the facility awards committee for review and recommendation. Initiators of nominations are **not** to gather approval signatures prior to facility Awards Committee review.

Facility Awards Committee.

- 1. Shall read all nominations prior to the scheduled committee meeting and make recommendations for approval of the nomination.
- 2. Make a recommendation to approve or not approve as written. However, if the facility Awards Committee finds the nomination needs additional information, they will return the nomination to the initiator with recommendations to assure approval.
- 3. The Facility Awards Committee timeframe for processing Commissioned Corps nominations is 2 weeks or 10 business days. Therefore, upon receipt of the nomination, the Awards Committee Chairperson is required to assure distribution of the nomination to committee members prior to scheduled meeting.

4. Upon recommendation of approval from the Facility Awards Committee the Committee Chairperson will seek local approvals and forward the nomination within one week to the CO Area Awards Coordinator for processing.
5. The CO Awards Coordinator assures that the nomination(s) is reviewed and receives approval or a recommendation for approval by the Area Director then forwards the nomination to IHS/PHS HQ for processing.
6. In the event the nomination is not approved or recommended for approval by the Area Director, the CO Area Awards Coordinator will return the nomination to the service unit with an explanation; not later than 1 week from receipt.
7. It is the responsibility of the Area CO Awards Coordinator to coordinate the whereabouts of award nominations submitted and to assure timeframes are met.

Upon approval from PHS/IHS/HQ the award, the certificate and hardware issued is sent to the Area CO Awards Coordinator. The Area CO Awards Coordinator will forward the certificate and hardware to the facility for distribution at an appropriate ceremony. Hardware for the highest awards, Distinguished Service Medal (DSM), Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) Surgeon General's Medallion (SGM), Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal (SGESM), Outstanding Service Medal (OSM), and Outstanding Unit Citation (OUC) will be held for officers for presentation at the annual awards ceremony at the Department, HQ or Area Director level as delegated. (See <http://dcp.psc.gov> for additional descriptive information and nomination forms).

B. **Civil Service Monetary Awards.**

**Supervisory Responsibility.**

1. Supervisors of civil service employees are required to assure they have committed a portion of their operating budget for monetary awards for individual employees and other recognition material as appropriate for their staff. This amount shall not be less than 1% of employee base salary for the division or service unit department.

2. Supervisors will nominate civil service employees for monetary awards (time-off awards are considered monetary awards) in accordance with the provisions of IHS Circular 97-10, Section C. The intent of IHS Circular 97-10 was to simplify the process for approving monetary recognition; therefore, nominations for monetary awards for civil service employees will not require Award Committee recommendation. The nomination form can be found at Exhibit 97-10-E of IHS Circular 92-10.
3. Supervisors are required to assure that nominations are supported by the actions of their subordinates and have been properly reviewed by the designated approving official (as described in IHS Circular 97-10, Exhibit 97-1-C, Monetary Awards, Approvals and Delegations) which includes at a minimum a higher level supervisor and a funds available signature from a designated budget control officer.
4. Upon securing appropriate approval signatures the supervisor will assure that nominations are appropriately forwarded to either the service unit HR Program for processing/submission to the Area HR office.
5. The HR Program/office will review the nomination for compliance to IHS Circular 97-10 using a check off sheet (See Exhibit A, "Tools for Successful Completion of Monetary Award Nominations") within the pay period it is received. Any additional information must be requested within the week of receipt. If no other information is needed, the HR Program/office will process the monetary award within the same pay period as receipt.
6. Supervisors, who are asked for additional information, must provide the additional information immediately (not more than 1 week from request). In no case will the processing (paying out) of a monetary award be delayed for longer than two pay periods. The normal process for obtaining additional information shall be over the telephone and through the facsimile machine or other immediate response tools.
7. The Area Director's Performance Improvement Team Award may be awarded on yearly basis. All nominations will be sent to the Quality Council Committee for review.

#### Awards Committees

The Awards Committees are required to perform post-review of all monetary (includes time-off) awards granted within their service unit/office and to report on trends and expenditures on a quarterly basis to the Executive Officer/Area

Director. (See [www.home.albuquerque.IHS.gov](http://www.home.albuquerque.IHS.gov) on more descriptive information for preparation of monetary awards and award form.) (See Exhibit A for sample process for monetary award.)

C. *Non-monetary/Honor Awards.*

Each service unit will develop an Honor Awards policy to assure employees, tribal leaders, tribal health programs, contractors, and other community members may be officially recognized for noteworthy contributions and/or support made to the improvement of health care in general, health care programs or health care to individuals. See <http://www.opm.gov/perform/honorawd.htm> for the Office of Personnel Management's honor awards calendar, a sample "Gotcha" Honor Award and other honor awards for consideration. CEOs are reminded to fulfill their labor/management requirements as appropriate in developing local policy.

Each facility Award Committee is responsible for the following steps related to Honor Awards:

1. Develop a local honor awards program in conjunction with their Executive Committees and in accordance with this policy.
2. Issue notification to all employees of upcoming honor awards cycles in accordance with local policy and the Area policy.
3. Assure supervisors, managers and peers as well as patients, tribal and community leaders are aware that they may submit award nominations within set timeframes.
4. Nominations are submitted using the attached nomination form. (See IHS Circular 97-10, [www.ihs.gov](http://www.ihs.gov))
5. Convene meetings to review submissions and make recommendations to the CEO for final selection of honor award recipients.
6. Coordinate local honor award ceremony on an annual basis.

6. **ALBUQUERQUE AREA ANNUAL HONOR AWARDS PROGRAM.** The Area Director's Annual Honor Awards Ceremony will be held the second quarter of each fiscal year to recognize nominees' noteworthy service, contributions and achievements made over the past 12 month period. These awards are honorary and as such do not have a monetary component to them. Nomination for Honor Awards are submitted using "Honor Award Nomination Form" (Exhibit B). However, supervisors may use the criteria upon which the honor award was based to support a monetary award for those eligible nominees who were selected for an Area Director honor award. (IHS Circular 97-10)

Area Director's Honor Awards include:

- Employee of the Year
- Nurse of the Year
- Medical Provider of the Year
- Area Director's Distinguished Service Award
- Area Director's Outstanding Manager of the Year
- Area Director's Special Recognition Award
- Area Director's Outstanding Support Services Award

A. **Honor Award Criteria.**

1. ***Employee of the Year Award.*** This award identifies the Albuquerque Area Employee who has been identified as the most outstanding employee in the Area. The candidates for this award are those employees who have been identified through their respective Service Unit and the Area Office Employee of the "Month" awardees. If service unit/facility is too small for "Employee of the Month", then the facility will develop and select an employee on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.
  - a. **Eligibility:** All service unit employees (Civil Service and Commissioned Officer) and contractors identified as an employee of the month are eligible for consideration.
  - b. **Criteria:** Documentation describing a single act or series of acts, which demonstrate high quality work performance; contributions outside the normal scope of work; morale boosting efforts, etc.
  - c. **Presentation:** The Albuquerque Area Employee of the Year award will be presented at the annual honor awards program.
  - d. **Description:** An appropriately inscribed 10 X 13 plaque bearing the employee's name, title and citation of not more than 25 words describing the contribution.
2. ***Nurse of the Year Award.*** This award identifies the Albuquerque Area Nurse who has been identified as the most outstanding nurse in the Area. The candidates for this award are those employees who have been identified through their respective Service Unit as Nurse of the Month awardees. If service unit/facility is too small for "Nurse of the Month" then the facility will develop and select an employee on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.

- a. Eligibility: All service unit employees (Civil Service and Commissioned Officer) and contractors previously identified as a Nurse of the month are eligible for consideration.
  - b. Criteria: Documentation describing a single act or series of acts, which demonstrate high quality work performance; contributions outside the normal scope of work; morale boosting efforts, etc.
  - c. Presentation: The Albuquerque Area Nurse of the Year award will be presented at the annual honor awards program.
  - d. Description: An appropriately inscribed 10 x 13 plaque bearing the employee's name, title and citation of not more than 25 words describing the contribution.
3. ***Medical Provider of the Year Award.*** This award identifies the Albuquerque Area Physician or other medical provider who has been identified as the most outstanding medical provider in the Area. The candidates for this award are those employees who have been identified through their respective Service Unit as physician or medical provider of the month awardees. If service unit/facility is too small for "Area Physician of the Month", then the facility will develop and select an employee on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.
  - a. Eligibility: All service unit employees (Civil Service, and Commissioned Officer) and contractors previously identified as a physician/medical provider of the month are eligible for consideration.
  - b. Criteria: Documentation describing a single act or series of acts, which demonstrate high quality work performance; contributions outside the normal scope of work; morale boosting efforts, etc.
  - c. Presentation: The Albuquerque Area Medical Provider of the Year award will be presented at the annual honor awards program.
  - d. Description: An appropriately inscribed 10 x 13 plaque bearing the employee's name, title and citation of not more than 25 words describing the contribution.
4. ***Area Director's Distinguished Service Award.*** This award recognizes the efforts of an individual or group of individuals for their dedication and commitment to the mission and goals of the IHS. The candidate for this award have demonstrated work of a single or ongoing nature that



directly supports the improvement of the quality of services to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

- a. Eligibility: All service unit employees (Civil Service and commissioned officer), contractors, tribal employees and tribal leaders whose documented activities show a positive impact on the delivery of and quality of health care provided to patients through innovative and previously unidentified means.
- b. Criteria: Documentation describing a single act or series of acts, which demonstrate quality work or contributions in or outside the normal scope of work that are directly traceable to the IHS Mission of improving the quality of health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- c. Presentation: The Albuquerque Area Director's Distinguished Service Award will be presented at the annual honor awards program.
- d. Description: An appropriately inscribed 10 x 13 plaque bearing the employee's name, title and citation of not more than 25 words describing the contribution.

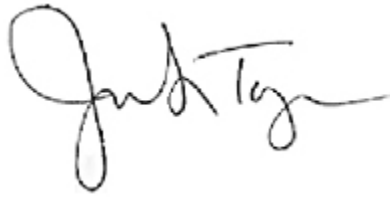
5. ***Area Director's Outstanding Management Award.*** This award was established to honor employees who occupy management positions who have achieved maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the management of an Indian Health Service or Tribal Health Program and to recognize those individuals who demonstrate extraordinary initiative while performing their management duties in an outstanding manner.

- a. Eligibility. Any individual employed by the IHS or Tribal Health Program who directs a program or function or is directly involved in the formulation, overseeing, or executing of management policy.
- b. Criteria. Documentation describing an ongoing performance which demonstrate quality management work or contributions within or outside their normal scope of work that exhibited best practices in highly efficient and effective management decisions that increased or improved the quality of health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- c. Presentation. The Albuquerque Area Director's Outstanding Management Award will be presented at the annual honor awards program.

- d. Description. An appropriately inscribed 10 x 13 plaque bearing the employee's name, title and citation of not more than 25 words describing the contribution.
- 6. ***Area Director's Special Recognition Award.*** This award recognizes and honors health care professionals for their contributions to the improvement of the health of American Indians.
  - a. Eligibility. All service unit employees, (Civil Service and Commissioned Officer) contractors employees and tribal leaders who are health care professionals and ancillary health care technicians are eligible for consideration.
  - b. Criteria. Documentation describing a single act or series of acts, which demonstrate quality work or contribution within or outside the normal scope of work that had a direct and positive affect on patient care.
  - c. Presentation. The Albuquerque Area Director's Special Recognition Award will be presented at the annual honor awards program.
  - d. Description. An appropriately inscribed 10 x 13 plaque bearing the employee's name, title and citation of not more than 25 words describing the contribution.
- 7. ***The Area Director's Award for Community Injury Prevention.*** This award recognizes groups or communities who have taken extraordinary positive steps in training, educations, and other programs to support injury prevention; advocating safety in homes and throughout communities.
  - a. Eligibility. All service unit employees (Civil Service and Commissioned Officer), contractors, tribal employees and community members who have taken a lead role in community injury prevention are eligible for consideration.
  - b. Criteria. Documentation describing a single act or series of acts, which demonstrate a reduction in community injuries or a specific prevention program with a wide dissemination as well as community recognition of said program.

- c. Presentation. The Albuquerque Area Director's Community Injury Prevention Award will be presented at the annual honor awards program.
    - d. Description. An appropriately inscribed 10 x 13 plaque bearing the employee's name, title and citation of not more than 25 words describing the contribution.
  - 8. ***Length of Service Recognition.*** Albuquerque Area Employees who have already reached a service anniversary of 20, 25 or 30 years within the calendar year of the awards ceremony will be presented a 7 x 9 plaque inscribed with their name, title and the number of years of service being celebrated. Those employees who reach their service anniversary after the awards ceremony will receive their commemorative plaque during the next honor awards ceremony.
- B. **Area Honor Awards Committee.** The Area Director will appoint awards committee members and the members will serve at the pleasure of the Area Director and may be replaced at the discretion of the Area Director. The Area Director will be the sole person to excuse award committee members from serving.
- 1. **Area Honor Awards Committee shall consist of the following members:**
    - a) Awards Coordinator
    - b) ,Service Unit nursing staff representative
    - c) Service Unit clinical staff representative
    - d) Area Office staff representative
    - e) Service Unit CEO representative
    - f) EEO representative
    - g) Commissioned officer representative
    - h) Health board representative
    - i) Member from each labor union with a recognized contract
  - 2. **Honor Award Committee members' duties:**
    - a) Arrange for location
    - b) Develop and print awards program (brochure)
    - c) Arrange for food
    - d) Arrange for proper publicity
    - e) Order awards
    - f) Issue invitations
    - g) Decorate and clean up
    - h) Complete annual report

7. **SUPERSESSION**: This policy supersedes the AAIHS Circular No. 96-03 entitled "Time Off for Incentive Awards" dated November 10, 1996 and any other existing area wide award policy (s).
8. **EFFECTIVE DATE**: This circular is effective upon date of signature and shall remain in effect until canceled or superseded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Toya". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James L. Toya

1/16/03

**CHECK LIST FOR MONETARY (INCLUDES TIME OFF) AWARD NOMINATIONS  
UNDER IHS CIRCULAR 97-10. (Exhibit 97-10 E)**

If you are nominating an employee for a monetary (time off included) award under IHS Circular 97-10 here are some of the items you should look at before submitting your nomination. In attention to these items only serves to delay processing of your actions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Are items 1 through 13 completed?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a different name and signature for each entry for items 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 is required to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Is the nominee's name different than the signatures in items 9, 10, 11, 12, and/or 14?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Are the nominees civil service employees? (Individuals who are Commissioned Corps officers, Tribal employees or contracting with IHS through temporary service employers or personal services contracts or other direct contracts are not eligible for monetary awards).
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Did you name the specific award in item 4 (i.e. On the Spot, Time-off, Innovation/ Initiative, Outstanding Teamwork, Superior Support Service, Superior Customer Service, Superior Administrative Service, QSI) for which this nomination was submitted?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Did you review the employee's position description and identify contributions above and beyond what is already required by the position description?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Did you answer/address the following questions?
  - a. What was done?
  - b. Why is it exceptional and exemplary?
  - c. What are the reasons the work deserves a monetary award?
  - d. What level of award is recommended?
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Is the timeframe for the work over an entire 12 months?
9. \_\_\_\_\_ If so, would a performance award be more appropriate? (See criteria outlined below.)

***Is this award based on superior performance? If so, did you address the following:***

10. \_\_\_\_\_ What is the employee's rating of record?

11. \_\_\_\_\_ Does the performance demonstrate one of the following:

Significant, substantive and measurable contributions to important organizational goals.

Mastery of technical skills and thorough understanding of organizational goals exerted a major positive influence on program implementation, management practices, or operating procedures that contributed substantially to organization growth and recognition.

Intelligent and effective handling of particularly difficult assignments, were the results included innovative and useable solutions to persistent, complex, and/or unexpected and formidable problems.

12. \_\_\_\_\_ Does the award nomination describe in sufficient detail how the employee accomplished one of the above (see # 7 a. then c.)?

13. \_\_\_\_\_ Recommendations from Human Resources:

***Tracking your award is also important; therefore, you might want to notate the following dates:***

Date nomination to Budget and Approving Official:

Date nomination Returned:

Date nomination sent to HR program for processing:

Date nomination returned from HR for additional information:

Date returned nomination to HR:

Date SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action Received:

Date presented to employee:

**Tools for Successful Completion of Monetary Award Nominations**

Many times when nominations for monetary awards are returned for more significant information, you are not certain what the HR office wants. If you use the following example to document the reason (s) why you believe your employee deserves a monetary (includes time off) award, you will be addressing the items reviewed by the HR Office in determining if your nomination meets the criteria outlined in IHS Circular 97-10. Using this format should reduce the number of returned nomination for information:

**SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR NOMINATIONS FOR MONETARY AWARDS:**

This employee (s) is being nominated for (name of award, i.e. On the Spot, Outstanding Teamwork, Superior Support Service, Superior Customer Service, Superior Administrative Service, Performance Based) award for his/her/the group's work in the following (i.e. specifically name the task, job, special assignment, etc.) because the work had a positive affect on ( i.e. the Mission of IHS, local program goals, Area mission statement, etc.) in assisting in the improvement of (patient care delivery, support of patient care delivery, administrative improvement for the entire Agency, etc.).

The employee's position description requires that the employee (do whatever the PD says they are supposed to do). The employee exceeded the requirements of the position description in the following manner (describe what the employee did here). This (enhances patient care delivery, support of patient care delivery or provides for administrative improvement for the entire Agency) by (state what it is – be specific i.e. the new advance ordering system which has been automated for surgical supplies allows the delivery of surgical supplies within 24 hours versus the normal 72 hours required while automatically charging the correct CAN number, requiring less interaction by no fewer than 3 other employees thus freeing them up to process other supply needs for the service unit. This innovation will be introduced to other service units Area wide and offered to other Areas throughout IHS. As a result this innovation developed by employee will save not only time in ordering, but will save human resource costs and assist in the reduction of warehouse or storage space.)

Another good tool to avoid any question about whether your nomination will be returned to you is to use the check off list on Exhibit A, page 1 & 2. . It includes all the information that HR office is looking for before processing of the nomination you submitted.

## HONOR AWARD NOMINATION FORM

1. Name of Award for which nominated: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name, title and grade, work location: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Brief description of nominee of present duties and responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the specific accomplishment or contribution upon which this nomination is base:  
(Not to exceed one page which you may attach separately)

Previous awards:

Proposed citation: (25 words or less beginning with the word "For...")

SUBMITTED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<b>Award Committee Action:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend to be Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Do Not Recommend Approved	<b>Area Director's Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved
_____ Signature Award Chairperson      Date:	_____ Signature AD                                      Date:
Date Nominator Notified of Results:	Date Supervisor Notified of Decision:



